

Subject: bifurcated letters on coins;
California Coin Club membership.

Kennedy, John P.
(Los Angeles, CA)

1930-1931

John P. Kennedy
APPRAISALS
ROOM 501 BANK OF ITALY BUILDING
7TH AT OLIVE STREET
Los Angeles, California

February 27, 1930

Dr. Howland Wood, Curator,
American Numismatic Society,
Broadway and 155th Street,
New York City, N.Y.

My dear Dr. Wood:

We have a lot of hungry students in our California Coin Club who want to know something about the so called bifurcated letters, such as "t" in the word Liberty. We have numerous coins here, the base of which is split. Some believe that it is due to the flow of metal in the making of the coin. Others believe that the letters were purposely designed in this manner.

Another question we would like to ask is, can a letter such as "i" in Liberty have a straight base and another impression from identically the same die have the base of the letter "i" bifurcated?

In any event, we would be very grateful to you for an expression of opinion along this line. These so called bifurcated letters are perfect in many instances, which would indicate that they were actually designed with a split bottom, yet some of our members think that this was not the intention of the die maker, but simply a fault in the flow of the metal as stated.

Thanking you for any help you can give us along this line, we beg to remain

Very respectfully,

CALIFORNIA COIN CLUB

By John P. Kennedy
President

JPK:EJB

March 4, 1930

Mr John P. Kennedy
501 Bank of Italy Bldg
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Sir:

Replying to your inquiry of the 27th, I have always considered that the bifurcated letters on coins are due to the striking, and are not caused in any way by specially cut dies for the purpose. With the methods and machinery employed a hundred years ago, or more, the metal planchet had a chance to spread while it was being struck, and consequently wherever there was a chance for the metal to splay towards the outer edge, it naturally did so. Where the die is cut in a line on a radius of a circular, such as an upright stroke of any letter round the edge, as an E and an I, the metal will follow the course of least resistance, thereby creating a suction or you might say a vacuum, causing the bottom of these letters to be different from what was intended.

I would suggest that you write to Mr. John R. Sinnock of the Philadelphia Mint, for his opinion, and I think that Mr. Beistle who has just gotten out his book on half-dollars, has made some study of this phase.

Yours very truly,

Curator.

J. H. Kennedy
President

M. H. Carey
Vice-President

Dr. Chas. Harbeck
Treasurer

Dr. R. H. Swift
Secretary

California Coin Club

Office of Secretary
Room 203 Hillstreet Bldg.
Los Angeles

January 19, 1931

Mr. Howland Wood,
American Numismatic Society,
156th and Broadway,
New York, New York.

My dear Mr. Wood:

As president of the California Coin Club it becomes my pleasant duty to inform you of your election as an honorary member of the California Coin Club. I trust that our action will be agreeable to you and that the Club may have the pleasure of welcoming you to its fold during the 1932 convention, if not earlier.

For our information won't you kindly give us a short biographical sketch so that we may record it in our records?

With kindest personal regards, which I am directed to convey to you from each member of our Club, I beg to remain

Very respectfully,

CALIFORNIA COIN CLUB

By John P. Kennedy
President

B

February 10, 1931

John P. Kennedy, Esq.
President, California Coin Club
Room 203 Hillstreet Bldg
Los Angeles, Calif.

Dear Mr. Kennedy:

I am sorry that my reply to your nice letter of January 19th, informing me of my election as an honorary member of the California Coin Club, has been so long delayed. This was due to my absence from the office.

It gives me great pleasure to accept this honor, and as I have never been west, I am hoping to get to the coast in the near future. As you request, I am attaching a short history of myself.

Please convey to your members my hearty thanks and best wishes.

Very sincerely yours,

Curator.